

DEI Leadership Seal Program



State Bar of California DEI Leadership Seal Program Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs are a living document. They are subject to revision and will be supplemented and updated as needed.

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1. Overview and Application

1.1 What is the State Bar DEI Leadership Seal program?

The DEI Leadership Seal Program is an optional recognition program that California legal employers can participate in to signal their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

As part of its [2022 Diversity Report Card](#), the State Bar of California published [Calls to Action](#) that legal employers and attorneys can implement to support greater DEI in the workplace. The DEI Leadership Seal program recognizes California legal employers that commit to and implement specific DEI action items.

1.2 What does my organization have to do to participate?

To be a **participating employer**, an employer must **commit** to implementing at least 5 of the 10 Action Items. However, employers will not be deemed **seal recipients** or receive the DEI Leadership Seal until they **implement** at least 5 of the 10 Action Items.

Participating employers will be listed on the State Bar [website](#), whereas DEI Leadership Seal recipients will be listed on the State Bar website and receive a seal that they can use on their web and print materials to signal their participation in the program to employees, job candidates, clients, and more.

1.3 How do I apply for participation in the DEI Leadership Seal program?

To be considered for participation, please download and complete the [application form](#). Once complete, please email the form and any supporting documents to DEILeadershipSeal@calbar.ca.gov. For consideration as part of the first cohort of participating employers, please submit your application materials by **March 31, 2023**.

2. Eligibility and Employer Requirements

2.1 What types of employers are eligible to apply for the DEI Leadership Seal?

Employers, regardless of sector, that employ California-licensed attorneys are eligible to participate in the DEI Leadership Seal Program. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, law firms of all sizes, in-house legal departments, legal academia, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies with attorney staff.

2.2 Can employers with offices both in and out of California (such as national or international law firms) participate in the program?

Yes. Employers may choose to commit to and implement the Action Items for either their entire firm or only their California offices. If an employer commits to and implements the Action Items for specific offices, only those offices would be listed as participating employers and eligible to use the DEI Leadership Seal on their materials.

2.3 Can legal departments or teams within a larger employer (like a corporation's legal department, or a university's law school) participate in the program?

Yes. Employers may choose to commit to and implement the Action Items for either their entire organization or only their legal department or team. If an employer commits to and implements the Action Items only for their legal department, only that department would be listed as a participating employer and eligible to use the DEI Leadership Seal on its materials.

2.4 Can solo practitioners participate in the program?

Unfortunately, currently, the program is not well-suited for or targeted to solo practitioners because the Action Items focus on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion among attorneys and staff of multiple people. The State Bar will consider

opportunities for solo practitioners to engage in its DEI work in other ways and encourages feedback on how best to do so.

2.5 Is participation in the DEI Leadership Seal Program required for employers with California attorneys?

No. The DEI Leadership Seal Program is voluntary.

3. Action Items and Implementation

3.1 Where did the list of Action Items come from?

The Action Items were derived, in part, from the Calls to Action in the State Bar's 2022 Diversity Report Card and based on research on best practices to improve workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as feedback from various stakeholders across a variety of sectors in the legal profession. The [Calls to Action](#), available by sector, provide additional best practices and resources. Calls to Action for attorneys are also available to encourage individuals to take an active role in advancing DEI in the workplace.

3.2 When will my employer receive the DEI Leadership Seal?

The program will have semiannual application windows for participating employers to indicate their commitment to 5 of the 10 Action Items. The first round of applications is due March 31, 2023. Please allow approximately two months for State Bar staff to review and respond to applications.

Participating employers will then have up to **one year** to implement the action items before receiving the DEI Leadership Seal to use on their own materials. Employers must demonstrate implementation of 5 of the 10 Action Items to receive the DEI Leadership Seal.

3.3 What if my employer has already implemented at least 5 of the 10 Action Items? Do I need to wait a year to receive the DEI Leadership Seal?

If your organization has already implemented 5 of the 10 Action Items (including the 2 that are required), please indicate that on your application and provide the requested documentation. If your employer's implementation of the Action Items is sufficient, you can receive the DEI Leadership Seal as soon as your application is reviewed.

The DEI Leadership Seal program will recognize bronze, silver, and gold seal recipients, based on the number of Action Items implemented.

- Employers that implement **5** Action Items will be recognized as **bronze-tier** recipients.

- Employers that implement **7** Action Items will be recognized as **silver**-tier recipients.
- Employers that implement **9** Action Items will be recognized as **gold**-tier recipients.

All participating employers, regardless of tier, must commit to implementing the first 2 Action Items and then select from the remaining 8.

3.4 Does the State Bar have any guidance on how to implement the Action Items?

The State Bar has created a [Resource Guide](#) that provides tips and best practices to consider when implementing the Action Items. The guide is intended to be one tool to help organizations develop and achieve their DEI goals and is not intended to provide step-by-step instructions.

4. Program Benefits

4.1 How can my employer use the DEI Leadership Seal?

DEI Leadership Seal recipients can use the seal on their website and print materials, including on their career website and job postings, promotional materials to clients, and more.

4.2 What benefits are available to participating employers?

Participating employers and seal recipients will be listed on the State Bar [website](#). The State Bar plans to provide opportunities for participating employers to convene and discuss their DEI efforts, for example, at future Diversity Summits. The State Bar regularly hosts Diversity Summits to convene stakeholders to present and discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices in the legal profession.

The State Bar is also exploring additional benefits and opportunities it can provide to or facilitate for participating employers and seal recipients. These might include opportunities to participate in social media campaigns about the program, preferred job boards, and career fairs.

5. The State Bar and DEI

5.1 What is the goal of the DEI Leadership Seal Program?

In support of the mission to “support... efforts for greater access, and inclusion in, the legal system,” the State Bar aims to encourage and incentivize legal employers to take action to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations. Similarly, promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal system is a key priority of the [State Bar’s 2022–2027 Strategic Plan](#). A more diverse, accessible, and inclusive legal workplace

improves the experience of employees and their clients. A legal profession that better reflects the diversity of California’s communities can improve public access to, and fair treatment in, the legal system.

5.2 Why is the State Bar administering this program?

The State Bar’s mission is to protect the public and includes the primary functions of licensing, regulation and discipline of attorneys; the advancement of the ethical and competent practice of law; and **support of efforts for greater access to, and inclusion in, the legal system**. Additionally, the State Bar of California’s strategic goals include “promot[ing] diversity and inclusion in the legal system.”

5.3 Is the State Bar, as an employer, participating in the program?

Yes. The State Bar has committed to seeking gold tier seal recipient status. You can track the State Bar’s progress [online](#) as it implements the Action Items.

5.4 Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Please email DEILeadershipSeal@calbar.ca.gov with any questions or feedback.